

# P-BA & Interreg: some philosophical questions

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**Interact**



**Co-funded by  
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Interreg

# Objectives of the workshop

## General objective

Start a discussion on the role of Interreg in wider Cohesion Policy

## Specific Objective 1

Consider how the “piloting philosophy” applies to Interreg

## Specific Objective 2

Consider the compatibility of the “piloting philosophy” with P-BA

# What you can expect

## What we will try to cover

The “Piloting philosophy” in Interreg

- What it is
- Challenges and benefits

How the “Piloting philosophy” could be impacted by P-BA

## What we will not cover

Not a training on P-BA

Detailed discussion on:

- Upper and lower-level P-BA
- Examples of measures in Interreg
- How P-BA will be audited
- Costing and pay-out values
- Other specific topics

# Agenda/ 28/4/2026

09:00 - 09:45

“The piloting philosophy” in Interreg and compatibility with P-BA

09:45 - 10:00

A polling exercise

10:00 - 10:30

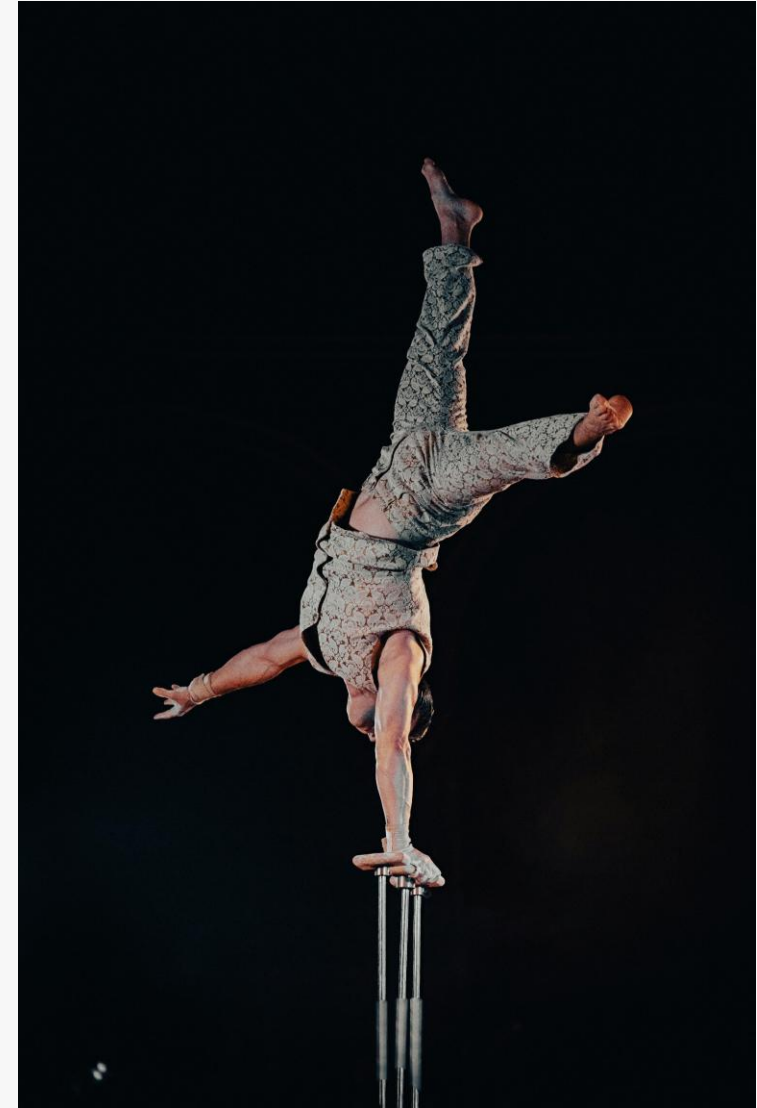
Plenary discussion & wrap up

**Question for participants**  
**Is failure always a bad thing?**

# The two “Ps” Pilots & P-BA



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# The “piloting philosophy”

What:

Small strategic experiments

Applying theoretical knowledge  
to real-world situations

Goal:

To find out what works in practice,  
in which contexts

- so that new practices can be  
taken up and used.

# Piloting vs delivery: a fictional example

Your programme area includes a sea.

The sea is the border between several different countries.

It is very polluted.

Your programme only has a limited amount of money to spend on cleaning it.

# Piloting vs delivery: a fictional example

	Project A	Project B
Budget	5 Million	5 Million
Goal	Clean as much water as possible during the project lifetime	Trial different methods for cleaning water to see which is most cost-effective
Known outcome	10 cubic km of water cleaned	0.5 cubic km of water cleaned Knowledge about which method is most cost-effective
Potential outcome	-	1000 cubic km cleaned financed by other funding sources (5+ years after project)

# Piloting vs delivery: a fictional example

Leads to  
impact which  
is:

Project A - delivery

Immediate

Known

Limited

Project B - pilot

Not immediate

Not certain

But potentially much greater

# Challenges of the piloting philosophy

Real impact hard to measure

Value harder to communicate

Needs planning and coordination

# How to increase changes that pilot results will be used

Is there a demand for the project results?

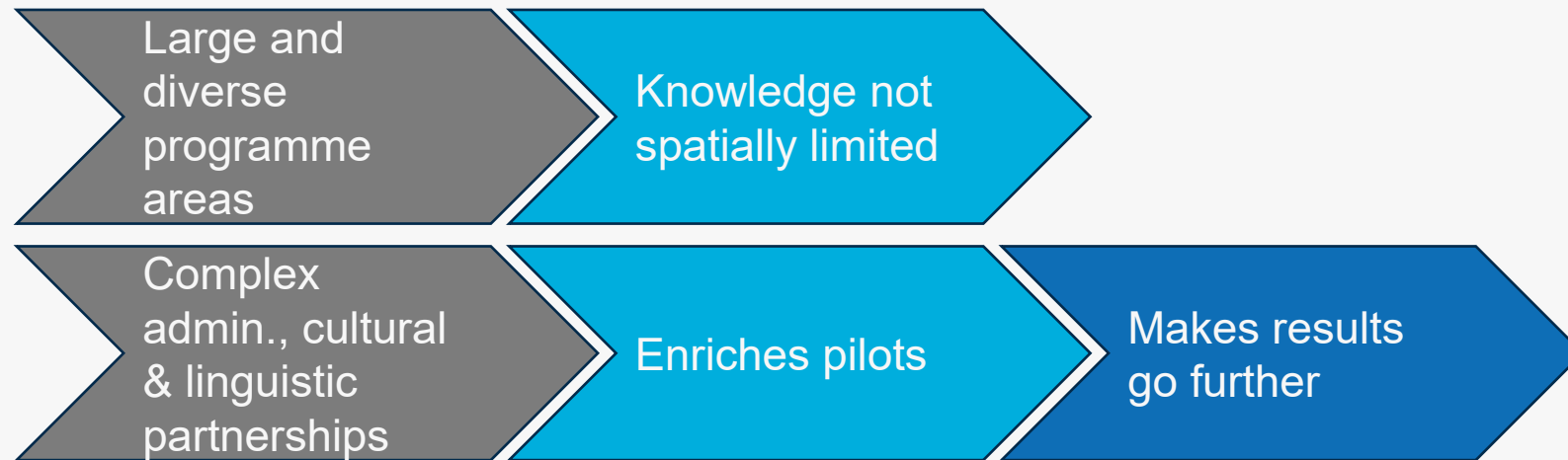
Are the people who want the results involved in the project (e.g. Steering Group)?

Do pilots take place in diverse locations to increase transferability?

Is there a dissemination plan? Are future funders identified (preferably at application stage)?

# Benefits of the piloting philosophy

Turns Interreg's weaknesses into strengths



# Some pilots will fail

Under the piloting philosophy, some of your pilots will fail... You must accept this.

By definition, the results of any given pilot is unknown since it has not been tried before (at least in that context).

You have to find a balance:

- If your pilots **never** fail, then you are not piloting but delivering known solutions.
- If **all** your pilots fail, then you are not being strategic.

# Failing in the right way

Given that some of your pilots will fail, you should:

1. Not give them a large budget which will cause financial strain if lost. Only fund them with *money you are prepared to lose*.
2. Fund lots of *diverse* pilots, rather than a few. This will spread the risk.

# Failing in the right way

**And finally.... learn lessons from your failed pilots.**

If you learn your lessons, spread them and apply them... you haven't actually failed.

You have increased your knowledge about what *doesn't* work which can help you in your search for what will work. And it has prevented failure on a larger scale.

# P-BA: what is it and why are we talking about it?

What is a Performance-based approach (P-BA)?

A system of reimbursement

- Where payments are linked to meeting **pre-agreed conditions** with **pre-defined monetary value**

# P-BA and the piloting philosophy

Potentially, P-BA favours projects whose outcome and design is known in advance:

- Payments are linked to *pre-defined* conditions with *pre-defined* monetary value – the programmes define them *ex ante*.
- The conditions and monetary value of pilots are by their nature, difficult to know in advance unlike for delivery projects.
- **If you do not know what you are buying, how can you know what is a fair price for it?**

# P-BA and the piloting philosophy

HOWEVER! We are **NOT** saying that pilots and P-BA are incompatible. Our thinking is:

- There is a danger that programmes will drift towards delivery-style projects by default since it could be the path of least resistance.
- It may require a conscious effort from programmes to adapt P-BA to their piloting philosophy (if they have one).

**You've heard from us..  
What do you think?**